



SANDRA SHEWRY
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

February 22, 2005

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: DRUG RESISTANT STRAIN OF HIV – UPDATE

The purpose of this letter is to clarify information that has been released regarding the recent discovery of a multi-drug resistant strain of HIV (MDR-HIV).

As you may know, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announced on February 11, 2005, that a New York City (NYC) man was diagnosed with MDR-HIV, and had rapidly progressed to AIDS. The strain is reportedly resistant to all classes of antiretroviral medication except for the new class of fusion inhibitors represented by Fuzeon.

A press release from San Diego County Health Department followed that announcement, stating that a San Diego, California, resident was found to have a similar strain of the virus. On February 18, 2005, San Diego County health officials announced that the information was inaccurate and that it had been determined that the specimen in question was not from San Diego. A few subsequent media articles have implied that the specimen was from another county within California.

The California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS has been in communication with the laboratory that compared their database to the MDR-HIV genetic sequence of the NYC case. The laboratory has confirmed that there is no evidence to indicate that the specimen or patient originated in California.

Please feel free to share this letter with your colleagues in your local health jurisdiction.

Michael Montgomery, Chief
Office of AIDS